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UNDP AND UNITED NATIONS REFORM

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report, prepared as a basis for discussion on item 3 of the provisional agenda, highlights the specific contributions of UNDP to the follow-up to the Programme of Reform of the Secretary-General (A/51/950) and the corresponding General Assembly resolutions 52/12 A and 52/12 B as well as resolution 53/192 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

2. In addition to the above legislation, UNDP has taken as its basis for its implementation of United Nations reform the mandate given it by the Executive Board in its decision 94/14 of 10 June 1994, to help the United Nations family become a unified and powerful force for sustainable human development.

3. At the request of the Administrator, the United Nations Development Group Office (DGO) has prepared an update of overall progress to date pursuant to the Secretary-General's reform initiative (see annex to the present report). The Administrator wishes to express his sincerest appreciation to United Nations Development Group (UNDG) partners, especially the members of the United Nations Development Group Executive Committee, without whose full engagement and participation none of the achievements to date would have been feasible.

II. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PROGRAMME OF REFORM

4. The Programme of Reform (A/51/950) made five specific recommendations that directly involve UNDP: (a) the creation of the United Nations Development Group (Actions 9 and 10, paragraphs 73 and 153); (b) predictable funding through multi-year arrangements (Action 11 (a), paragraph 167); (c) relations with the World Bank (paragraphs 79 and 167); (d) support for natural disaster mitigation activities (paragraph 189); and (e) establishment of the United Nations

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Enterprise Liaison Service (Actions 17 (c) and (d)). These recommendations are discussed below and outstanding issues are highlighted.

A. United Nations Development Group

5. As indicated in the report of the Administrator to the Economic and Social Council (DP/1999/10), the creation of UNDG represented, from the UNDP perspective, a strong boost to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions on operational activities, namely resolutions 47/199, 50/120 and 53/192. UNDP provides important support to this recommendation of the Programme of Reform through its funding of DGO, which serves, inter alia, as the permanent secretariat for UNDG. The reaffirmation in the Programme of Reform of the role of UNDP as the funder and manager of the resident coordinator system as well as the provision that the Administrator chairs UNDG provide for considerable managerial coherence both at headquarters level and at the country level. A very positive development has been the secondment of senior staff from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which has increased the sense of common ownership of and participation in DGO by other United Nations entities.

Remaining challenges

6. UNDG has achieved rapid progress on specific provisions of the legislation in operational activities, as detailed in document DP/1999/10. The main remaining challenge is to achieve effective outreach to the United Nations system as a whole since operational activities coordinated under the resident coordinator system concern the system as a whole. Bridge-building through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its subsidiary machinery, especially the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) will be a priority in 1999 and coming years. The encouraging role of governing bodies of the funds and programmes as well as of the specialized agencies will be crucial to further progress here. At the inter-agency level, CCPOQ, at its fourteenth session in March 1999, approved, on behalf of ACC, the landmark ACC Guidance Note on the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF), which de facto converted the CCA/UNDAF into tools for the use of the system as a whole and not only of the United Nations entities. This step helps to address a major concern of Member States regarding the involvement of the United Nations system as a whole. At its first session for 1999, on 9 April, ACC took note of the CCPOQ action and also approved a statement supporting the follow-up to resolution 53/192.

Recommendations

7. The Executive Board may wish to call on UNDP, through its participation in UNDG, in ACC and the ACC machinery, and through its direct support to DGO, to continue to support and promote ongoing efforts to build bridges between the work of UNDG and the operational activities of the United Nations system as a whole.

B. Predictable financing through multi-year arrangements

8. The Programme of Reform calls for the development of a proposal on core funding with burden-sharing and multi-year pledges. The landmark Executive Board decision 98/23 of 23 September 1998, as well as its decision 99/1 of January 1999, paved the way for a new era in the core funding of UNDP. UNDP is currently in the process of developing the multi-year funding framework (MYFF), which integrates programme objectives, resources, budget and outcomes. The overall objective of the MYFF is to increase core resources; in doing so, it will both serve as the basis for future multi-year funding by all UNDP contributor countries and outline the results to be achieved with the announced resources.

Remaining challenges

9. The focus of the present discussion is less on UNDP itself than on the contribution the organization can make to United Nations reform in general; the challenge presented in this context, therefore, is to ensure coherence, cross-fertilization and learning among the different multi-year funding initiatives under way in the United Nations funds and programmes as well as in the broader United Nations system. Here the role of the Economic and Social Council at the intergovernmental level and that of ACC at the inter-agency level are crucial.

Recommendations

10. The Executive Board may wish, taking into account the results of the first annual funding session held in April 1999, to call upon Member States to increase core funding for all United Nations operational activities on a continued, assured, predictable and multi-year basis; and to provide the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly with specific recommendations on the future of the United Nations pledging conference, taking into account the views expressed by Member States.

C. Relations with the World Bank

11. UNDP has always had, and will continue to have, a strong operational relationship with the World Bank. Efforts to strengthen these operational relationships continue and these are reflected in the annual report of the Administrator.

12. At a more general level, the reform processes both within UNDP and within the World Bank have focused attention on the need to redefine, and indeed to reinvent, the relationship between UNDP and the World Bank. With the adoption of its strategic compact, the World Bank has made a major commitment to poverty eradication and to a significant change process that would help it to achieve its objectives. As a result of this change process, there is no longer the same clarity that previously existed between the rules and functions of the World Bank on the one hand and United Nations entities on the other.

13. The new situation presents tremendous opportunities and also some concerns. The new focus of the World Bank on a number of the key goals articulated by the

global conferences is providing significant support to the achievement of those goals. The Administrator believes there is enormous potential for strengthened collaboration to attain globally agreed objectives.

14. UNDP and the World Bank are engaged in extensive discussions on a number of issues that have arisen out of the change processes being undertaken by both organizations. Constructive exchanges of views have been held regarding the issue of access to grant-based funding for technical cooperation.

15. Discussions have also been held regarding the World Bank's initiative to launch comprehensive development frameworks (CDFs). UNDP has always been deeply involved at an operational level in supporting national capacity-building for aid management. To the extent that Governments may wish to launch a CDF process, UNDP stands ready to respond to requests for assistance. At the same time, it is clearly premature to reach a conclusion on what the CDF means in operational terms. UNDP, through UNDG, will also focus on the future relationship between the CDFs where they are launched and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and a number of issues will need to be clarified in this respect.

16. From the perspective of UNDP, the comparative advantage of UNDG lies precisely in considering such questions as the relationship of the CCA/UNDAF to the CDF and how a forum can be established through which the United Nations entities can arrive at a common understanding on these matters. Direct outreach to the World Bank should continue to be at the level of the individual funds and programmes, such as UNDP, who have active and growing bilateral operational relationships with the World Bank. In this bilateral relationship, the funds and programmes could express the common understanding within UNDG.

Recommendations

17. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Take note of the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Development Group regarding collaboration with the World Bank;

2. Encourage the United Nations Development Programme to develop further its productive, direct relationship with the World Bank, particularly at the operational level.

D. Support for natural disaster mitigation activities

18. The Programme for Reform called for the transfer to UNDP of technical cooperation support functions in natural disaster mitigation. This transfer has now been effected and the funds corresponding to 1998 from the $2.3 million foreseen for it in the United Nations biennial budget have now been transferred from the regular budget of the United Nations.

19. UNDP has absorbed the responsibilities previously held by the Emergency Relief Coordinator for operational activities in natural disaster mitigation,

prevention and preparedness. The responsibilities formally discharged by the United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme and Disaster Mitigation Branch (in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the past) have now been integrated into the Disaster Reduction and Recovery Programme (DRRP), based in Geneva, as part of the Emergency Response Division of UNDP.

20. Seven professional staff along with additional support staff have been recruited to support the ongoing efforts of UNDP in disaster reduction and recovery activities. UNDP goals in disaster reduction and recovery are to achieve a sustainable reduction in disaster risks and the protection of development gains; reduce the loss of life and livelihoods due to disasters and ensure that disaster recovery serves to consolidate sustainable human development.

21. DRRP has already initiated new capacity-building activities in developing countries aimed at promoting comprehensive disaster reduction approaches, establishment of national and subregional disaster reduction strategies, incorporating disaster mitigation, legislation in disaster-prone countries. UNDP also supports a coordinated inter-agency approach within the United Nations system and with other development partners, including NGOs.

Remaining challenges

22. The importance of this area of cooperation was highlighted by the recent series of natural disasters, including those related to the El Niño phenomenon and Hurricane Mitch. These natural disasters emphasize the importance of continued efforts at developing national capacity for disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness.

Recommendations

23. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Take note of the progress achieved so far in the transfer of these functions to the United Nations Development Programme;

2. Encourage the creation of further links between these activities and the mainstream capacity-building activities of the United Nations Development Programme in the area of disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness within country cooperation frameworks, especially in those countries prone to natural disasters.

E. Establishment of a United Nations enterprise liaison service

24. In his Programme of Reform, the Secretary-General requested a proposal on a liaison service with the private sector along the lines of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), which is already in operation for relations with civil society. UNDP, after consultations within UNDG and with NGLS, developed a proposal that was submitted to the Secretary-General on 5 December 1997.

Remaining challenges

25. Subsequent inter-agency discussions within ACC and elsewhere have shown little enthusiasm for the creation of yet another liaison service, regardless of its location. Such units have considerable problems in ensuring lasting material and financial support from member organizations.

26. The challenge has been now redefined as the need to achieve some common understanding among organizations of the United Nations system on interaction with the private sector, especially in view of the statements made by the Secretary-General at the World Business Forum held in Davos, Switzerland, in 1998 and in 1999. He called for greater collaboration and for a global compact between the United Nations system and the private sector, based on the norms of the United Nations system, initially in three areas: human rights, environmental norms and labour standards. Interaction with the private sector was also the main theme of the first session of ACC, 9-10 April 1999. Clearly, most entities of the United Nations system have growing relations with the private sector and such a common understanding is an imperative.

Recommendations

27. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Take note of the changed focus of the recommendations contained in Actions 17 (c) and (d) of the Programme of Reform;

2. Encourage the United Nations Development Programme to pursue its inter-agency dialogue with other members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination with a view to arriving at a common understanding on interaction with the private sector.

Annex

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PROGRAMME FOR REFORM
PROGRESS IN THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT GROUP
AN INFORMATION NOTE
PREPARED BY THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT GROUP OFFICE
APRIL 1999

In his 1997 report, "Renewing the United Nations: a Programme for Reform (A/51/950)," the Secretary-General offered a comprehensive plan to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations to enable it to meet the challenges of the new century.

Many of the reform actions aim to strengthen the United Nations as a force for sustainable, people-centred development and poverty eradication. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG), created as a key feature of the Secretary-General's reform programme, brings together United Nations entities dealing with development issues. It is led by an Executive Committee comprised of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the World Food Programme (WFP), and is chaired by the Administrator of UNDP.[1]

The principal goal of UNDG is to strengthen the policy and programme coherence and effectiveness of United Nations development activities. To that end, the group helps to facilitate joint policy formulation, decision-making, and programme coordination among the United Nation development entities. UNDG also works to improve management and efficiency.

This update provides information on the progress made towards those objectives between July 1997 and April 1999.

I. ENHANCING THE UNITED NATIONS RESPONSE TO COUNTRIES' DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The United Nations works with countries around the world to help them to address a range of fundamental development problems. It does so by using the diverse skills and experience available among its departments, funds and programmes. While each organization has its unique strengths and talents, the reform initiative creates a framework in which individual United Nations organizations can work together and respond to the needs of member countries "in a

[1] The following entities are members of the full United Nations Development Group (UNDG): United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the regional commissions, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict. The UNDG Executive Committee is comprised of: UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, and other entities participating as warranted by their interests and mandates. The Office of the Spokesman of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) participate in UNDG as observers.

consistent, coherent, and cost-effective manner (see paragraph 149 of document A/51/950)" required in today's rapidly changing world.

A. Tools for change: the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

The Common Country Assessment (CCA) is a cross-sectoral process designed to provide a coherent, comprehensive analysis of a country's development needs as the basis for the United Nations to formulate a strategic response and focus for its activities. The CCA is a major step towards the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The UNDAF is a strategic planning and collaborative programming framework that helps to identify common priorities for United Nations action in agreement with national administrations. It requires close collaboration between the United Nations and other development partners such as civil society, bilateral aid organizations and multilateral institutions.

Soon after the announcement of the Secretary-General's Programme for Reform, the UNDG launched a pilot phase in July 1997 to test the UNDAF in 18 countries. Experiences were analysed and lessons identified from the pilot phase through a two-pronged assessment, culminating in an interagency workshop held in September 1998.

The workshop recommendations as endorsed by the UNDG, and General Assembly in its subsequent resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998, have guided the drafting of revised CCA and UNDAF guidelines. The wider circle of United Nations agencies that make up the United Nations system was also consulted extensively in the preparation of the revision. On 9 April 1999, all United Nations system agencies adopted the revised CCA and UNDAF guidelines.

Proposals for a phased but full extension of the UNDAF exercise to all United Nations programme countries are being prepared by the UNDG. The extended exercise will be linked to the harmonization of programme cycles of the United Nations funds and programmes, which the UNDG Executive Committee is accelerating in order to encourage better coordination of United Nations operational activities at the country level. UNDG expects to complete the harmonization of programme cycles for most countries by 2002, and for all countries by 2004.

B. Leadership for change: The resident coordinator system

One of the critical elements of the reform programme is to ensure more effective coordination of the United Nations operational activities. United Nations resident coordinators, who are funded and managed by UNDP, are the designated representatives of the Secretary-General for development operations and lead the United Nations country teams in 130 countries. In fulfilling this role, resident coordinators are expected to advocate the interests and mandates of the United Nations in development, drawing on the support and guidance of the entire United Nations family of organizations through the resident coordinator system, in which all United Nations agencies participate.

Ongoing efforts have been pursued to widen the selection pool of resident coordinators to include all organizations of the United Nations system, and to increase the number of women resident coordinators. Other measures adopted and now being implemented to strengthen the resident coordinator system include:

- **New selection procedures for resident coordinators,** which include an independent competency assessment of candidates and an interagency advisory panel established to provide an inter-agency review of potential candidates and to provide advice to the Administrator, who consults with the heads of other United Nations agencies before making recommendations to the Secretary-General;

- **Performance appraisals of resident coordinators and country teams,** which permit all members of the United Nations system to provide their feedback to the Administrator on the work accomplished;

- **Reporting and accountability guidelines for resident coordinators** through which the Administrator has provided written guidance to all resident coordinators on the reporting lines and accountability for their functions;

- **Revised annual reporting procedures for resident coordinators** which provide a clearer basis for assessing the work of the resident coordinator and the United Nations country team, including the implementation of an annual work plan developed by each country team;

- **Stronger backstopping from headquarters** which includes the allocation of substantial financial resources by UNDP for the use of resident coordinators to promote country-level coordination activities and to stimulate collaborative undertakings of the United Nations system;

- **Enhanced training support for resident coordinators and United Nations country teams** which will be in cooperation with the United Nations Staff College and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ).

C. Partnerships for change: Working with the World Bank

In his report, the Secretary-General called for "an appropriate distribution of responsibilities between the World Bank Group and the United Nations for the benefit of programme countries (paragraph 163 of document A/51/950)."

To this end, UNDG and the World Bank are focusing their attention on the following three areas:

- **Knowledge networks.** Discussions are currently under way between representatives of UNDG and the World Bank on the establishment of a global knowledge network and the possibilities for United Nations participation in such a network. UNDG and the World Bank have subsequently agreed to share their video conferencing equipment at the country level as a first step towards improved cooperation in this area;

- **Capacity-building and technical assistance.** In January 1998, a UNDG delegation met in Washington, D.C. with representatives of the World Bank to initiate a dialogue on cooperation in the area of technical assistance and capacity-building, an ongoing dialogue that is being broadened to include the Comprehensive Development Framework recently launched by the World Bank;

- **Interface between the UNDAF and Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) exercises.** UNDG and the World Bank identified Mali and Viet Nam as pilot countries for this exercise. Currently, UNDG is undertaking a review of the outcomes of the pilot exercise as a basis for encouraging further collaboration in other countries.

D. Closing the gap: Linkages among core missions and frameworks

In the spirit of the Secretary-General's reform proposals, UNDG is taking steps to ensure strong linkages between the work of UNDG and that of the other three Executive Committees created by the Secretary-General as one of his major reforms.

A joint **UNDG/Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs** working group has been established to assess how to strengthen the linkage between the normative and operational activities of the United Nations system as well as how to ensure the effective participation of normative agencies in the UNDAF process.

A joint meeting of the **Executive Committees for Peace and Security, Humanitarian Affairs** and the **UNDG** was held in November 1998 to discuss issues warranting a common approach by the three Executive Committees. The joint meeting recognized the need to reinforce the linkages between consolidated appeals for humanitarian assistance, UNDAF and other mechanisms for integrated programming for recovery. It decided that OCHA, as facilitator of the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and UNDG, as the lead of UNDAF, should be charged with the responsibility of ensuring there is consistent and regular exchange of information on the development of both processes. It was agreed that the revised UNDAF guidelines would incorporate a section on disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery, drafted in consultation with OCHA and other relevant United Nations bodies.

II. TURNING POLICY INTO PRACTICE

One of the key components of the reform effort is the translation of new ideas and knowledge into action. In addition to contributing to the formulation of United Nations development policy, the UNDG has committed itself to ensuring the transition of policy into practice.

A. Springboard for change: Follow-up to the United Nations global conferences

The resident coordinators and United Nations country teams have a special responsibility to work with Governments on the implementation of resolutions United Nations global conferences. Working with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the CCPOQ secretariat, the Administrator and UNDG are providing guidance to resident coordinators on the integrated follow-up to the major United Nations conferences. Annual reports of the resident coordinators are being monitored to assess the degree to which the United Nations is assisting countries to implement the follow-up to the conferences. Also, both the CCA and UNDAF mechanisms provide inter-agency platforms for dialogue and supporting action on conference follow-up.

B. The universality of human rights: the right to development

In line with the Secretary-General's call to make human rights a cross-cutting issue in each of the four substantive fields of the United Nations, including development, the UNDG Working Group on the Right to Development was established in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UNDG.

The Working Group on the Right to Development reviewed the provisional UNDAF guidelines and made specific proposals as to how the cross-cutting nature of human rights can be better reflected in the UNDAF process. In addition, the group prepared an informal guidance note addressed to all resident coordinators on how to approach communication issues relating to human rights.

C. Expanding the global talent pool: Gender perspectives

In his reform proposals, the Secretary-General stressed the need for the effective incorporation of a gender perspective in the programmes of all United Nations organizations. The UNDG Sub-group on Gender, formed in June 1998, reviewed the gender content of the pilot UNDAFs and proposed recommendations geared towards a more effective incorporation of a gender perspective in the UNDAF process. In addition, the Sub-group worked closely with the UNDG Working Group on Indicators to ensure that gender aspects were taken into account in the CCA core indicators and the final UNDAF guidelines.

Major tasks for the group for 1999 include: the monitoring of CCA guidelines and indicators from a gender perspective; developing a closer relationship with the thematic groups on gender in the field; the building of gender competencies for resident coordinator selection; working towards a consolidated United Nations approach to gender mainstreaming training/learning; and pushing ahead with training in the prevention of sexual harassment.

D. At the center of UNDG attention: Support for Africa

Africa is of central concern to the UNDG. In response, the members of the UNDG have actively participated in the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIA) to address the root causes of problems facing the continent and to support African development. African countries participating in the UNDAF pilot phase were encouraged to use UNDAF as a vehicle for UNSIA. Extensive consultations have also produced an integrated UNDG action plan to respond to the report of the Secretary-General on The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

E. World view: Globalization

At the ACC meeting in October 1998, United Nations leaders committed themselves to work together in response to the financial crisis and the challenges of globalization. UNDG was asked to provide guidance and support to country teams in this area. A UNDG Task Force on Globalization was established to share information within UNDG and to link with other parts of the United Nations system in their work on this topic. The Task Force prepared an action plan, which was shared with country teams to help them adjust their responses to the financial crisis. The Task Force is now in the process of analysing country team responses to the crisis with a view to exchanging and promoting good practices in social policy.

III. MAXIMIZING SKILLS AND RESOURCES FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE UNITED NATIONS

Resources available to the United Nations have to be used strategically for the greatest possible impact. UNDG members are especially concerned that the best possible use of their limited

resources be ensured for the benefit of the countries and peoples they serve. In line with the broader reform efforts initiated by the Secretary-General to improve the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the whole Organization, UNDG has been working on several joint initiatives.

A. Adding value: Harmonization of procedures and policies

The General Assembly has called for greater harmonization and simplification of the policies and procedures used by the major organizations of the United Nations system. As a step in that direction, the **UNDG Sub-Groups on Programme Policies and Programme Operations** have collaborated in clarifying programming terminology used by UNDG member organizations. This innovation simplifies cooperation efforts in the field and furthers the harmonization of operational policies and procedures. All resident coordinators and United Nations country teams now have common definitions of programming terms, including joint programming.

Further work is under way, both by individual members of the UNDG and by UNDG as a group, to modify programme procedures in light of the CCA and UNDAF experience. Other work is being carried out on common approaches and procedures for national capacity-building.

B. Resource-sharing: United Nations House/ common services

Among his reform measures, the Secretary-General proposed that all United Nations funds, programmes and information centres should be part of a single office under the United Nations Resident coordinator, called a United Nations House. To date, 31 United Nations Houses have been designated and a minimum of 10 more is expected in the next year. It is also anticipated that 20 more countries will be evaluated in 1999, with an implementation rate of 50 per cent in 2000.

When people work in the same building, collaboration becomes more likely and coordination becomes easier to facilitate. The establishment of a United Nations House also enables a wider sharing of support services among United Nations entities and a reduction in administrative costs. A common office building creates a sense of community and shared purpose among country team members.

The premises include the office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the offices of all representatives of the members of the UNDG Executive Committee and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) office. Organizations participating in the United Nations House share a commitment for cost-efficiency through the development of a framework for common services. Wherever feasible and cost-effective, other United Nations institutions will be invited to join the United Nations House.

A survey collecting information on common services was sent to all resident coordinators and field representatives for all UNDG Executive Committee agencies in February 1999, as well as to CCPOQ. Responses will be analysed to determine better the status and needs of common services in each country and will provide guidance for action from headquarters.

In a number of countries where United Nations Houses are not an immediate prospect, "virtual" United Nations Houses are being encouraged. Separate offices are connected through a country-based intranet to improve the sharing of information, practices and expertise.

In order to accelerate the decision-making process, the UNDG Executive Committee has created a joint management group that serves as a decision-making body vested with financial and administrative authority on all matters pertaining to common premises and services.

C. Preparing for change: Staffing, training and learning

Change is driven by people. To ensure that it can succeed, staff have to be encouraged, trained and given appropriate learning opportunities to meet the challenges that the reform process poses. Within UNDG, several teams are already at work to help staff to prepare for those challenges.

The **UNDG Sub-Group on Personnel** is currently working on two important staff development issues. First, the group is examining ways to increase staff mobility among its member organizations. As United Nations agency staff are being asked to think more strategically and cooperatively, broad exposure to a variety of agency perspectives and country situations becomes increasingly valuable. The group is also working on providing a better response to HIV/AIDS in the work place.

The **UNDG Working Group on Training** is currently examining four training/learning issues: (a) the support arrangements for the CCA/UNDAF process; (b) updating of existing training packages for HIV/AIDS for use by United Nations country teams; (c) the mainstreaming of human rights and gender issues into training initiatives; (d) coordination of training activities with the United Nations Staff College, especially in the area of United Nations coordination.

IV. THE WAY AHEAD: NEXT STEPS IN THE NEW CENTURY

The reform process is a dynamic one. The actions that have been outlined above are the first results in a continuing programme of reform and renewal. UNDG has set itself a comprehensive agenda, which takes the Secretary-General's reform initiatives forward in a number of areas such as programme collaboration, harmonization of procedures, strengthening of the resident coordinator system and rationalization of administrative structures and services. Building on its early progress, UNDG is energetically pursuing the task of improving the cohesion, impact and cost-effectiveness of United Nations development operations. The goal of improved operations is to increase assistance to the people in countries in which the United Nations works, particularly the 1.3 billion people who live in absolute poverty.

UNDG in brief

A key component of the reform is the grouping of the United Nations funds, programmes and other entities tasked with development activities into the United Nations Development Group, chaired by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. UNDG was established in 1997 to increase the effectiveness and impact of development operations. Seventy per cent of all the United Nations operational work is in development. UNDG members provide policy and programme support to more than 150 countries and deploy more than $5 billion in resources annually towards the promotion of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The United Nations Development Group Office was established by the UNDP Administrator to serve as a secretariat to UNDG and to support UNDP in its resident coordinator responsibilities. DGO is supporting the capacities of UNDG members to take joint action on a variety of reform initiatives. It also serves as liaison to United Nations entities such as CCPOQ to ensure close links between UNDG and the broader United Nations system.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1998

EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In 1998, the work of the Evaluation Office built on the three strategic directions outlined in the annual report of the Administrator for 1997: (a) supporting UNDP in becoming a results-oriented organization; (b) strengthening substantive accountability; and (c) promoting organizational learning. In so doing, the Evaluation Office encouraged the integration of monitoring and evaluation concerns in the change processes under way in UNDP. Sharing of knowledge with country offices and directly involving them in activities of the Evaluation Office became regular practices.

Substantial progress was made in 1998 in applying results-based management in UNDP. The Evaluation Office provided technical leadership and support in the design and implementation of the results framework, specifically the strategic results frameworks, which form part of the UNDP multi-year funding framework.

Concerning substantive accountability, a number of efforts were undertaken to connect evaluations and their findings to decision-making and enhanced organizational practices. This was pursued primarily through improved tracking and compliance systems, which have resulted, inter alia, in a rate of 71 per cent for strict compliance at the end of 1998 for the portfolio of projects approved in the biennium 1988-1989.

In the area of organizational learning, as part of the corporate efforts to make UNDP a learning organization, the Evaluation Office placed considerable emphasis on the systematic sharing of the lessons learned from empirical evidence. This was done by introducing products that provide timely, relevant lessons for practitioners and decision-makers.

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In 1998, the Evaluation Office and UNDP-associated funds and programmes carried out strategic and thematic evaluations. Specific emphasis was placed on implementing the recommendations made and translating evaluation findings into knowledge for the organization.

Partnership development was an essential dimension of the work of the Evaluation Office. Building on the initiatives undertaken in 1997, the Office developed its dialogue with its partners for evaluation cooperation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. During 1998, the Evaluation Office of UNDP concentrated on consolidating and operationalizing the orientations it had adopted for: (a) supporting UNDP in becoming a results-oriented organization; (b) strengthening substantive accountability; and (c) promoting organizational learning. In so doing, the Evaluation Office has encouraged the integration of monitoring and evaluation concerns in the change processes under way in UNDP.

2. As an integral part of the corporate effort to make UNDP a learning organization, the Evaluation Office placed a considerable emphasis on sharing the lessons learned from evaluations. In keeping with the guiding principles for UNDP set out by the Executive Board in its decision 98/1, the Office concentrated on building on lessons learned and on best practices to ensure that experience guides future programming. It also focused on ensuring that programme design is results-oriented and allows for impact evaluation.

3. Faced with these challenges, the Evaluation Office reorganized its internal structure to respond more effectively to the demands placed on it and promote team-building. Pursuant to the orientations taken in 1997, it invested in partnership-building as a means of better fulfilling its mandate and in particular further strengthened its links with country offices, which are seen as primary clients.

II. ACHIEVEMENTS

A. Result-based management and methodology

4. The Evaluation Office has played a key technical role in the design and introduction of results-based management (RBM) in UNDP. The work on the strategic results frameworks started in early 1998, when the Administrator requested the Evaluation Office to develop a framework for the assessment and measurement of programme results. This work became all the more urgent with the debate in the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on a Funding Strategy and the agreement reached in landmark decision 98/23 of the Executive Board.

5. The introduction of RBM followed on the lessons learned from the joint study by UNDP and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Measuring and Managing Results: Lessons for Development Cooperation, published in 1997. This facilitated the integration of monitoring and evaluation concerns in the design of the RBM system. This has also led the Evaluation Office to define its future role in this area, providing methodological support such as the technical note on the UNDP results framework targeted at country offices and operational units.

6. In October 1998, UNDP, together with SIDA and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, organized a workshop to review the experience of bilateral and multilateral agencies and lessons learned in applying RBM.

7. These lessons formed the basis of the principles guiding RBM in UNDP:

(a) The system must be kept simple;
(b) The system must be rooted in the culture of the organization;
(c) Introducing RBM takes time and must be approached as a learning exercise;
(d) The organization should emphasize performance management and not merely the application of indicators.

8. The contribution of the country offices was of particular value in ensuring that the approach chosen fully corresponds to the needs of the country offices. While difficulties were initially experienced at the pilot stage in grasping the proposed frameworks, they gradually came to make full use of them for the management of the programme. One of the major lessons was, therefore, that RBM in UNDP must focus on performance management rather than measurement and become a management tool for the programme units as much as a reporting instrument at the corporate level. This balanced approach is well accepted by the different parts of the organization and is also well received by Board members. During the pilot process, programme countries formally expressed their interest in and support of a results-oriented approach for UNDP.

9. A large part of the work done by the Evaluation Office in this area concentrated on outcomes. This was seen as particularly important since RBM introduces the monitoring of outcomes as one of its key components. Outcomes are defined as actual or intended changes in development conditions, which UNDP interventions are seeking to support. Since these changes are or will be the results of collective interventions of different partners and not generally the result of an intervention of a single partner, the shift to outcomes makes partnership one prerequisite. This renewed importance of partnership led the Evaluation Office to reinforce the emphasis it had already been placing on partnership development and joint evaluations.

10. In line with its priority to encourage the integration of monitoring and evaluation concerns in the change processes, the Evaluation Office has made a major effort to train UNDP staff in results-oriented monitoring and evaluation. A complete training package has been developed for country office use. So far, a total of 186 staff members from 91 countries have been trained through two regional courses organized in Pakistan and Syria and five induction courses for junior professional officers and national programme officers, which were held in New York. Regional workshops were attended by other United Nations agencies, namely, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme.

11. In the immediate future, the Evaluation Office will provide further support for the implementation of the results framework. Building on earlier research, the Office, together with the Bureau for Development Policy and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, will carry out joint work on defining and applying indicators in the area of governance.

B. Substantive accountability

12. Compliance remains only one of the means of ensuring accountability and is only quantitative in nature. It is important that the quality of reports allows for full benefits to be derived from the evaluations. It is expected that the training and learning effort undertaken by the Evaluation Office in cooperation with country offices will help programme managers to monitor evaluation better and will lead to a continued improvement in the quality of reports.

13. A rate of 71 per cent for strict compliance has been attained for the portfolio of projects approved in the biennium 1988-1989, surpassing the overall target of 70 per cent set for the end of 1998. This represents a significant improvement compared to the rate of 43 per cent when internal compliance monitoring was started in January 1995. For the same biennium, the rate of likely compliance increased from 76 per cent reported last year to 79 per cent and the overall number of projects with an unclear evaluation status has been reduced from 41 to 32. The annex provides detailed information and data on strict and likely compliance.

14. To encourage country offices to make further use of evaluations, the Evaluation Office introduced evaluation plans as a tool to enhance evaluation planning. The plans are established at the country level for a three-year period and contribute to the interaction between country offices and the Evaluation Office, which monitors the plans.

15. After the evaluations themselves take place, it is important that lessons drawn from them become part of the knowledge of UNDP. Recognizing that it is frequently not possible to ascertain whether evaluation recommendations have been implemented, the Evaluation Office adopted a tracking system to ensure that evaluation recommendations are indeed implemented. The tracking is done at the country level through the annual programme/project reports, which have a specific part that is devoted to the implementation status of recommendations made by evaluators.

16. At the corporate level, the Evaluation Office has played a more active role in its relation with senior management with regard to evaluation recommendations. For these recommendations to be taken into full consideration, the Evaluation Office provided special briefings to regional bureaux and senior management, in particular to the Executive Committee. In addition, the Evaluation Office produced management briefs that provide senior management with evaluation findings that have organization-wide implications and with recommendations that can lead to policy decisions. The Office is keeping track of the policy decisions made as follow-up and their implementation status.

C. Learning and knowledge dissemination

17. The experience gained by the Evaluation Office demonstrates that, although information dissemination is important, it is not in itself sufficient to promote learning. Information gathered needs to be analysed and synthesized so that it can be assimilated and used. In addition to expanding substantially the information it offers on evaluation, the Evaluation Office has therefore

intensified its efforts to convert information into knowledge for the organization. It concentrated on relevant guiding principles for UNDP that were endorsed in Executive Board decision 98/1, in particular building on lessons learned and on best practices to ensure that past experience guides future programming and that programme design is results-oriented and allows for impact evaluation.

18. The Evaluation Office has set up a team to act on the issue of knowledge and learning; the team is dedicated to supporting the corporate efforts in this regard as well as to developing products that will add to the store of knowledge in the country offices and that will be customized to their needs. A description of the major efforts to achieve this objective follow.

19. The central evaluation database (CEDAB), revamped with a new search engine, was made available on the Intranet (http://intra.undp.org/eo). It is a useful source for country offices in their efforts to design better projects and programmes by applying lessons learned from evaluations carried out by other country offices on a given subject. The Evaluation Office will make CEDAB more interactive and promote its use so that country offices will become more familiar with the database and the products it offers.

20. The Evaluation Office developed its own web site, which offers access to a large number of documents in English, French and Spanish and other sources of information on monitoring and evaluation. These include the handbook Results-oriented Monitoring and Evaluation; Guidelines for Evaluators; Programme Outlines, Programme Designs and Results Expectations; evaluation reports such as those on the programme approach and on environmental programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean; and on-line training in monitoring and evaluation. The web site also provides useful links to other evaluation sources offered by major multilateral and bilateral organizations.

21. The Office launched a newsletter entitled Evaluation Update. Published three times a year, it offers information on important initiatives and results of evaluation activities. The initial feedback from country offices was extremely positive and the publication will be continued.

22. To assist UNDP country offices to improve the quality of programme design and implementation as well as the results achieved, the Evaluation Office developed the publication Essentials. The objective is to distil the main lessons learned by UNDP and other development partners on selected topics of priority interest, synthesize them, and present them concisely in a format that programme managers in country offices can use with ease. The Evaluation Office conducted an analysis of over 200 programme outlines to identify UNDP priority areas at the country level. As a result, the first three issues of Essentials have been formulated on area-based development programmes, micro-finance and support to legislatures. They will be finalized for dissemination in the first half of 1999.

23. The UNDP Evaluation Network (EVALNET), established as a corporate initiative in 1998, represents a concrete example of building strategic partnerships with country offices. The network is composed of 32 members,

almost exclusively from UNDP country offices. The members applied and were selected as a result of their experience and interest in evaluation. They will be associated with evaluation work, including the development of evaluation methodologies, evaluation capacity development and related activities where they can develop their professional skills. EVALNET was launched to harness the knowledge and expertise existing in the organization in monitoring and evaluation issues. It will also ensure more effective mainstreaming of monitoring and evaluation concerns and the enhancement of the country office capacity in evaluation through staff involvement. The network encourages the exchange of experience among its members and promotes a horizontal dialogue on evaluation matters among country offices, thus contributing to a culture of learning in UNDP.

D. Completed and ongoing evaluations

1. Strategic evaluations

24. The Evaluation Office has tried to systematize its approach to the selection of priority evaluation topics. Criteria were developed to identify issues of corporate interest and the priority attached to them at a given time. The approach was also helpful in determining whether the role of the Evaluation Office should be that of a manager or a provider of technical advice. As a consequence, the Office initiated two strategic evaluations, one on refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the other on the relationship between UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

25. The ongoing evaluation of UNDP assistance to refugees and IDPs started in 1998 with the objective of assessing UNDP interventions in this new area of responsibility for the organization and laying the basis for UNDP to become a more effective development partner in post-conflict situations. This timely subject was regarded by senior management as particularly strategic since over the last several years, UNDP has been responding to a sharply increasing demand for assistance in conflict-affected countries. However, UNDP involvement and programme results have not gained sufficient recognition and in some cases have stirred controversy. It was thus especially important to clarify how UNDP should position itself in this area and the value it could add through such interventions. To validate the analysis and the conclusions reached, the Evaluation Office will hold a high-level seminar with representatives from other international agencies, governments and research and policy institutions.

26. The subject of the second strategic evaluation in progress, namely, the relationship between UNDP and UNOPS, had already been touched upon in earlier evaluations of national execution and co-financing as well as the one initiated on refugees and IDPs. It was identified as a priority owing to the current status of UNOPS as a self-financing organization separate from UNDP, the number of areas of cooperation between the two organizations and the importance of this cooperation. The objective is not to evaluate either of the organizations as such but rather to focus on their working relationship and the way to derive fuller benefits from the UNDP/UNOPS partnership. The proposal was welcomed by UNOPS, which was closely consulted from the initial stages of the preparation of the evaluation.

27. In 1998, the Evaluation Office also completed a strategic evaluation of the programme approach. Conceived as a forward-looking assessment, the evaluation was designed to take stock of UNDP experience to date and generate lessons for further refinements. The evaluation found the programme approach to be appropriate for building stronger development partnerships through broader national ownership, coordination and co-financing. Partnership was, in fact, singled out as pivotal to the success of the programme approach. This dimension is of primary importance for the synergy between the programme approach and RBM. Pilot countries involved in the UNDP RBM exercise confirmed the value of the programme approach in defining strategic results and the key partnerships needed to achieve intended outcomes. However, the evaluation found that the country offices and the programme countries believed that the application of the programme approach involved a disproportionate preoccupation with the format of the documentation rather than with the spirit of the modality. The evaluation concluded that this perception would have to be reversed to maximize the impact of the programme approach. The Evaluation Office initiated a broad-based discussion within UNDP on the implications of the evaluation conclusions and on possible follow-up actions.

2. Thematic evaluations

28. The evaluations of UNDP activities in governance in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Arab States concluded that the role and contribution of UNDP were critical in advancing the democratization process in many countries of the region. The neutrality and credibility of UNDP as an organization were particularly important for issues such as human rights, popular participation and social cohesion. At the request of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Evaluation Office provided a review entitled "The Role of Non-governmental Organizations and the Promotion of Human Rights", which covered five countries in the region. The review was presented at the regional conference on human rights held in Yalta in September 1998.

3. Evaluations at the country level

29. The Evaluation Office continued to monitor evaluations at the country level and the recommendations made as a result of them. In 1998, the Office received a total of 85 reports against 79 the previous year.

4. Evaluations by programmes and funds

30. In 1998, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) undertook 15 evaluations in irrigation, infrastructure, agriculture and eco-development. Out of this total, 10 evaluations were final, four were mid-term and one was ex post. UNCDF currently has 31 evaluations planned for 1999 although approximately half of those will be handled directly by the programme officers at the country level. UNCDF also developed its capacities in monitoring and evaluation in reviewing its programmes and approaches. This was done for local development funds, eco-development, microfinance and roads.

31. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) carried out evaluations of two major programmes: (a) the Pacific Mainstreaming Initiative

and (b) support to women's peace organizations in the East and Central Africa region. UNIFEM also strengthened its function as a learning organization able to derive programming strategies and support policy formulation from the thematic review of its programme activities. By disseminating the lessons learned from its various activities, UNIFEM thus ensures that experiences and results are captured and knowledge is made available to its staff, partners and constituencies.

32. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was involved in a number of studies and evaluations, including the second independent evaluation of the UNDP/GEF small grant programme in Papua New Guinea and UNDP/GEF projects in marine, coastal and freshwater ecosystems. Follow-up projects respond directly to evaluation recommendations and incorporate the lessons learned. UNDP/GEF prepared a summary of the project implementation review 1998 that contains the lessons learned and emphasizes the importance of a phased approach, capacity development, leveraging and more active stakeholder involvement.

33. The United Nations Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO) carried out two evaluations from its 1998 portfolio. In addition, UNSO conducted an assessment of the National Action Programme (NAP) processes for the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. The assessment, which used a matrix of indicators, revealed significant progress in NAP processes although it was noted that in some countries, the involvement of some key stakeholders in civil society might not have been satisfactory. The results of the assessment were shared at the Second Conference of the Parties in Dakar, Senegal, in December 1998.

34. The United Nations Volunteer Programme (UNV) conducted a number of evaluations: one thematic review (Eco-volunteer review); one country programme review (Namibia); one interregional project evaluation (Interregional Volunteer Programme for Artisan Support (IVPAS)); and seven evaluations of country-based projects. In order to use evaluation recommendations more effectively in programming, UNV has begun to systematize the corporate assessments of lessons learned from major evaluations. In 1998, this included the eco-volunteer review and the IVPAS evaluation.

35. Findings confirm the importance of the role of UNV in development cooperation, particularly in community-based initiatives. In order to sustain and develop this comparative advantage and continually to improve support to the programme, UNV started an in-depth review of its fieldworker modality. Evaluation findings highlighted that UNV has been successful in exploring new ways of promoting volunteerism, e.g., through its eco-volunteers and through support to the South African Student Volunteer Organization. Concerns pertain to some instances when delays have occurred in the fielding of United Nations volunteers.

E. Development of partnerships

36. The Evaluation Office continued to deepen the partnerships that it had initiated earlier. One of the main dimensions of this effort relates to joint evaluations for which the UNDP Evaluation Office, together with UNFPA and

UNICEF, started preparatory work. In the context of the United Nations Development Group, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF intensified the exchange of evaluation-related information and conducted joint training events. UNFPA and UNICEF staff participated in the first EVALNET workshop as resource persons and agreement has been reached with UNDP for staff members from both organizations to become members of the network and be involved in its evaluation activities. A plan has been established to conduct evaluations jointly in 1999, thus responding to the request by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/192. UNDP and UNICEF intend to work together on a joint country evaluation and on one thematic evaluation on the role of non-governmental organizations.

37. As part of the United Nations reform process and under the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on Evaluation, the monitoring and evaluation offices of the programmes and funds have been involved in the preparation of the monitoring and evaluation guidelines for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

38. Discussions on evaluation capacity development (ECD) of the programme countries were held by the IAWG. Following presentations by UNDP and the World Bank on their respective experience, IAWG members concurred that ECD should be considered in the context of broader institutional development. Joint or participatory evaluations with a common definition of objectives, outputs and outcomes were recognized as powerful instruments for involving stakeholders in the projects and their assessment and developing partnerships.

39. To further work in this area, UNDP has developed partnerships with several multilateral and bilateral institutions. For example, in January 1998, UNDP and the World Bank formally entered into an agreement that includes a commitment to support an ECD initiative in Africa and Central Asia, exchange training packages and explore joint and parallel evaluations. UNDP was one of the sponsors of the regional seminar on ECD in Africa held in Abidjan in November 1998 under the auspices of the African Development Bank. It also started discussion for cooperation with the Government of China to provide training materials and assistance on ECD.

40. In line with the objective of harmonizing monitoring and evaluation policies within the United Nations system and in keeping with its mandate, the Evaluation Office provides guiding principles on monitoring and evaluation to United Nations funds and programmes. Funds and programmes determine, with the Evaluation Office, the flexibility they need given their specific context and requirements. As a result, it is important that the monitoring and evaluation capacities of the programmes and funds be strengthened and that the lessons learned as a result of their activities be fed into the organization and form part of the corporate knowledge gained by UNDP from evaluations.

41. To this end, the Evaluation Office has intensified its relationship with UNDP-associated programmes and funds with a view to shifting to interactive cooperation and broadening the UNDP coverage of monitoring and evaluation activities. In particular, negotiations are being actively pursued with UNCDF for the signing of a memorandum of understanding to define the partnership between UNDP and UNCDF in line with these policies.

42. The United Nations Foundation, Inc. (UNF) proposed that it would provide collaborative support to the UNDP Evaluation Office, as is the case with the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization. UNF regards the work of the Evaluation Office on strategic evaluations, methodology issues and knowledge-sharing as vital to the UNDP reform process. It also proposed an added feature, namely, the selective monitoring of outcomes and impact in relation to selected UNF thematic priorities. As a second area for cooperation, UNF indicated its readiness to support the Evaluation Office in developing methodological approaches.

43. The Danish Trust Fund managed by the Evaluation Office entered its operational phase in 1998. The programme, which tests innovative tools and methodologies in the areas of decentralization and people's participation and choices in five pilot countries, was integrated in the corporate-wide results exercise. The Evaluation Office provided technical support to the pilot countries for the implementation of a results-oriented monitoring and evaluation system. A workshop was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in January 1999, in which representatives of the oversight committee, including headquarters bureaux, all piloting countries and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participated. The workshop took stock of the various programmes and projects at the country level and mapped out a plan for the next steps.

44. The Evaluation Office also puts a priority on joint evaluations with key donors, such as the Government of Germany (decentralization programmes), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (poverty programmes in one region and cross-evaluations in either one or two countries).

III. DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

45. Pursuant to the orientations of its work during the last two years, the Evaluation Office will continue to fulfil its role as a provider of technical support for the implementation of UNDP results frameworks. In particular, the Office will offer its assistance to regional bureaux and country offices for the roll-out of the system planned for 1999. The Office will develop its research and methodology work on key components of the system, such as outcomes and indicators.

46. It is the intention of the Evaluation Office to reinforce its specific activities in learning and knowledge-sharing. The activities undertaken and the research conducted should in the immediate future be fully translated into knowledge that is available to the whole organization. With EVALNET and targeted publications, the Office has already identified the channels for reaching these objectives. Making them fully operational will be a priority area for the years to come.

47. The evaluation portfolio is expected to increase in 1999. The Evaluation Office will continue to carry out selected strategic evaluations and has planned to start country impact evaluations, five of which should take place in 1999. Evaluations on the impact UNDP has at the country level will enable UNDP to obtain assessments of the work it is doing and the partnerships it is developing

in those countries. The lessons to be drawn from these evaluations and the best practices identified could be inputs of particular value and be integrated in the development of the UNDP results frameworks.

48. Developing further its operational partnerships, the Evaluation Office intends to start joint evaluations with Germany, Japan, UNFPA and UNICEF in 1999. These will have a methodological or a thematic focus. Joint evaluations are a particularly crucial issue for the development work of UNDP and it is expected that they will substantially contribute to enlarging the knowledge of evaluation issues gained by UNDP.

IV. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

49. The Executive Board may wish to:

Take note of the results achieved through the evaluation activities in 1998, which reflect the role of the evaluation function as an instrument for change and organizational learning.

Annex

EVALUATION COMPLIANCE

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is the fourth on evaluation compliance submitted to the Executive Board. The presentation of the data follows the same format as previous analyses (DP/1996/CPR.7, DP/1997/16/Add.4 (annex II) and DP/1998/19).

I. COLLECTION OF REPORTS AND EXTRACTION OF DATA

2. The central evaluation database (CEDAB) is an institutional memory based on evaluation reports. The project evaluation information sheet (PEIS) is an abstract of the full evaluation report, which, when completed, enables the Evaluation Office to enter the data pertaining to every project/programme evaluation in CEDAB.[1]

A. Global analysis

3. The Evaluation Office received a total of 2,085 evaluation reports for the period from 1986 to 1998 (table 1) as against the 1,873 reported last year. The increase by 212 in the number of reports is due mainly to the inclusion of the evaluations for the years 1997 and 1998, with 79 and 85 reports received, respectively.

Table 1. Total number of evaluation reports received by the Evaluation Office by year of evaluation

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
209	158	159	193	262	240	197	131	141	139	92	79	85	2 085

4. The number of reports that have been processed, by year of evaluation, i.e., the number of reports for which the PEIS has been completed and the data have been entered into CEDAB, is shown in table 2. The corresponding data processing rates (number of reports processed as a percentage of the number of reports received) are given in table 3.

[1] The evaluation team leader must submit, together with the full evaluation report, a PEIS based on the evaluation report. The country office or headquarters unit that managed the evaluation should ensure compliance with the requirement to fill in the PEIS.

Table 2. Number of reports processed, by year of evaluation

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
59	87	134	148	207	166	157	96	85	96	72	42	41	1 390

Table 3. Data processing rates, by year of evaluation (percentage)

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Average
28	55	84	77	79	69	80	73	60	69	78	53	48	67

5. The overall rate of data processing for the evaluations conducted from 1986 to 1998 is 67 per cent (table 3) while the overall rate reported last year for the evaluations conducted in the period 1986-1996 was 69 per cent. The processing of data from evaluation reports was centrally managed by the Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning (OESP) (now the Evaluation Office) until 1996. It is expected that there will be an increase in the extraction rates for 1998.

B. Breakdown of evaluation reports provided by bureaux

6. The Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) was the leading annual contributor until 1992 (table 4); from 1993 until the present, the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific (RBAP) has been the main contributor. However, RBA continues to be the largest overall contributor for the period 1986-1998.

Table 4. Number of evaluation reports received, by bureau and year of evaluation

	Evaluation year													
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
RBA	78	74	78	90	140	113	85	40	53	41	32	11	20	855
RBAP	77	52	57	63	77	94	75	64	64	54	30	44	39	790
RBAS	18	22	9	9	21	12	18	10	7	11	18	12	9	176
RBLAC	20	3	14	29	22	17	16	14	14	23	9	12	13	206
RBEC	11	5	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	4	0	0	4	28
BDP	5	2	0	2	1	4	2	2	3	6	3	0	0	30
Total	209	158	159	193	262	240	197	131	141	139	92	79	85	2 085

7. Table 5 shows the number of evaluation reports, by bureau and evaluation year, for which the PEIS has been completed and the information has been entered in CEDAB.

Table 5. Number of evaluation reports processed, by bureau and by year of evaluation

	Evaluation year													
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
RBA	14	38	64	72	110	64	64	28	32	35	24	5	6	556
RBAP	34	39	50	48	64	80	69	56	49	46	29	25	24	613
RBAS	7	5	9	5	18	8	10	5	0	9	17	8	2	103
RBLAC	1	2	10	23	14	14	12	6	4	6	2	4	7	105
RBEC	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	9
BDP	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Total	59	87	134	148	207	166	157	96	85	96	72	42	41	1 390

8. Table 6 presents the rates of extraction (number of reports processed as a percentage of the reports received) by bureau. It can be observed that RBA, RBAP and RBAS achieved their annual peak rates in the period 1995-1996, when, as noted earlier, the processing of data from evaluation reports was still centrally managed by OESP.

Table 6. Rates of extraction, by year of evaluation (percentage)

	Evaluation year													
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Average
RBA	18	51	82	80	79	57	75	70	60	85	75	45	30	65
RBAP	44	75	88	76	83	85	92	88	77	85	97	57	62	78
RBAS	39	23	100	56	86	67	56	50	0	82	94	67	22	59
RBLAC	5	67	71	79	64	82	75	43	29	26	22	33	54	51
RBEC	Not meaningful													
BDP	Not meaningful													

C. Findings

9. The number of reports received annually has declined since 1991. However, from the 1998 evaluation planning exercise, it appears that a break in this trend will occur in 1998. The requirement that evaluators complete a PEIS has not been observed for all the evaluations conducted. Therefore, fewer reports were entered into CEDAB. This has resulted in a decrease in the rate of data processing, which has an impact on the growth of the institutional memory of lessons learned from evaluations.

II. COVERAGE

A. Existing rules

10. The mandatory evaluation of projects and programmes - as reflected in Results-oriented Monitoring and Evaluation: A Handbook for Programme Managers - is based on the following criteria approved by the UNDP Executive Committee on 6 June 1997: (a) scale of resources - large-scale programmes and projects, i.e., those with budgets of $1 million or more and (b) duration of technical cooperation, i.e., cooperation that has been provided to a particular institution for 10 years or more. The present report is limited to projects that meet the first criterion because the projects falling under the second criterion still cannot be easily traced with the current management information systems.

B. Time frame

11. The need for a 10-year period in which to complete the collection of evaluation reports relating to a specific year of project approval is confirmed by the data detailed in table 7, which shows the situation for the projects approved from 1988 to 1997. The 10-year period is a consequence of flexibility in the timing of the evaluations (mid-term, terminal and ex post).

Table 7. Number of evaluation reports received, by year of project approval and year of evaluation

	Year of project approval									
Year of Evaluation	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
1988	1									
1989	15									
1990	75	11								
1991	70	56	14	1						
1992	34	58	44	8						
1993	23	26	38	26	8	1				
1994	13	15	24	38	31	6				
1995	4	4	15	24	64	15	7	3		
1996	5	9	12	11	15	26	10	2		
1997	0	2	2	14	24	15	10	5	5	
1998	3	5	7	5	11	13	10	14	11	3
Total	243	186	156	127	153	76	37	24	16	3

C. Mandatory and other evaluations

12. The number of reports received on mandatory evaluations has decreased annually for the approval period 1988 to 1992 (table 8). The same trend applies

to the number of reports on non-mandatory evaluations for project approval years 1988 to 1991. However, the number of reports on non-mandatory evaluations received for approval year 1992 increased by 72 per cent over the number received for 1991.

Table 8. Number of evaluation reports received, by year of project approval

	Year of project approval					
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	Total
Mandatory evaluations	168	131	104	84	79	566
Non-mandatory Evaluations	75	55	52	43	74	299
Total	243	186	156	127	153	865

D. Financial coverage of projects subject to mandatory evaluation

13. The sources of the financial data for projects approved in 1998-1989, 1990, 1991 and 1992 are: (a) the annual reports of the Administrator to the Executive Board on programme implementation, and (b) the Programme Information Profiles issued by the Division for Administrative and Information Services (DAIS) at the request of the Evaluation Office.

14. Projects with budgets over $1 million continue to represent (a) 15 per cent of the total number of projects approved and (b) 66 per cent of the financial resources allocated for all projects (tables 9 and 10, respectively).

Table 9. Number of mandatory evaluations as a percentage of the total number of projects approved

	Year of project approval					
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	Total
Number of projects approved	1 794	1 437	1 256	1 152	1 395	7 034
Number of projects above $1 million	257	213	210	160	180	1 020
Coverage (percentage)	14	15	17	14	13	15

Table 10. Financial coverage of projects subject to mandatory evaluation ($ million)

	Year of project approval					
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	Total
Financial resources for all projects approved	808	673	850	631	841	3 803
Financial resources for projects above $1 million	562	446	526	408	579	2 521
Coverage (percentage)	70	66	62	65	69	66

15. The coverage decreases, however, when the calculations are based on evaluations actually conducted. The total financial coverage of projects eligible for mandatory evaluation and evaluated remains at 44 per cent, as reported last year.

E. Findings

16. The data on the financial coverage of projects with budgets of $1 million or more confirm the conclusions in previous years that the threshold of $1 million for mandatory evaluations is cost-effective. Compliance with the requirement for an evaluation based on the duration of the technical cooperation is not covered in the present report because the data still could not be easily traced.

III. COMPLIANCE

A. Global compliance

17. A rate of strict compliance of 71 per cent has been attained for the portfolio of projects approved in the biennium 1988-1989, surpassing the overall target of 70 per cent set for the end of 1998.[2] This represents a significant improvement compared to the rate of 43 per cent when internal compliance monitoring was started in January 1995. In view of the fact that the 10-year period for the full evaluation cycle has elapsed, there will be no further reporting on the performance of the 1988-1989 portfolio. The rates of strict compliance have improved over the rates reported last year for the projects approved in 1990 (from 51 to 59 per cent) and 1991 (from 47 to 56 per cent); however, they are still short of the targets set for the end of 1998 of 70 and 75 per cent, respectively. The initial compliance rate for the portfolio of projects approved in 1992 is 44 per cent. The overall combined rate of strict compliance for the years 1988 through 1992 is 62 per cent, which is higher than the 58 per cent reported last year for the period 1988-1991.

[2]The data provided for the portfolio of projects approved in 1988-1989 is analysed as a biennium to adhere to the initial reporting modality established in 1995.

18. The rates of likely compliance, which represent the long-term compliance rates (they take into account the number of reports awaited and the evaluations scheduled), have improved for the portfolios 1988-1989, 1990 and 1991 compared with the rates reported for these portfolios last year. The initial rate of likely compliance for the projects approved in 1992 is 51 per cent.

19. Additional justifications have been received for evaluations that have not been carried out; these are reflected under the category "evaluations not conducted, with full justification". For the portfolio of projects approved in 1988-1989, 1990 and 1991, the total number of projects with an unclear evaluation status has been reduced by 38 per cent (from 144 reported last year to 90). For the 1992 portfolio, the number of projects with an unclear evaluation status represents 47 per cent of the total portfolio for that year. This percentage is higher than the initial rate reported last year for the 1991 portfolio (28 per cent).

20. Senior management were updated in June and November 1998 on the progress in the compliance situation that had been reported as of January 1998; they provided full support to all the initiatives undertaken to improve the compliance rates. Continuous communication was also maintained with bureaux and country offices.

Table 11. Rates of strict and likely compliance

	Year of project approval				
	1988-1989	1990	1991	1992	Total
Mandatory evaluations (A)	470	210	160	180	1 020
Reports received (B)	299	104	84	79	566
Evaluations not conducted, with full justification (C)	35	20	6	1	62
Subtotal #1 (B+C)	334	124	90	80	628
Strict compliance (%): (B+C)/A	71	59	56	44	62
Reports awaited (D)	21	10	7	3	41
Evaluations scheduled (E)	14	21	17	8	60
Subtotal #2 (B+C+D+E)	369	155	114	91	729
Likely compliance if all reports are rec'd. (%): (Subtotal #2/A)	79	74	71	51	71
Evaluations not conducted but other actions taken	20	4	3	1	28
Not conducted but explained	49	17	19	3	88
No clear information	32	34	24	85	175

B. Compliance by the bureaux

1. Compliance status for project approval period 1988-1989

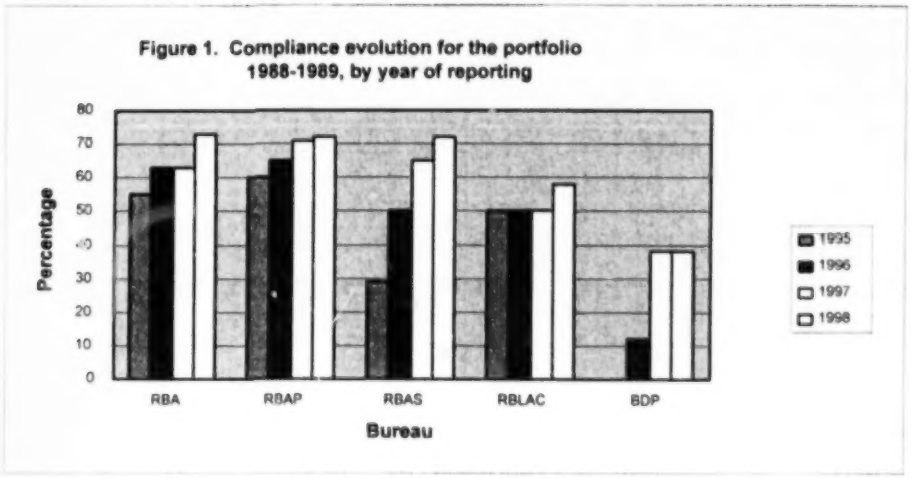
21. A 71 per cent rate of strict compliance has been attained. This is due to the increase in the rates of strict compliance for RBA (from 63 to 73 per cent), RBAS (from 65 to 72 per cent), RBLAC (from 50 to 58 per cent), and RBAP (from 71 to 72 per cent)(figure 1).

Table 12. Compliance status of the 1988-1989 portfolio, by bureau

	RBA	RBAP	RBAS	RBLAC	RBEC	BDP	Total
Projects over $1 million	194	201	46	12	1	16	470
Evaluations received	128	133	25	7	0	6	299
Evaluations not conducted, with full justification	14	12	8	0	1	0	35
Strict compliance (%)	73	72	72	58	100	38	71
Reports awaited	10	8	2	0	0	1	21
Evaluations scheduled	4	6	3	0	0	1	14
Likely compliance	80	79	83	58	100	50	79
Other actions	9	6	0	1	0	4	20
Evaluations not conducted	13	22	8	4	0	2	49
No clear information	16	14	0	0	0	2	32

22. The increase in the rate of likely compliance from 76 per cent reported last year to 79 per cent is due to the improvement in the rates of RBA and RBAS.

23. The number of projects with an unclear evaluation status has been reduced from 41 to 32. The projects in this category pertain mainly to regional projects/programmes.



RBEC is not included because only one project was subject to mandatory evaluation.

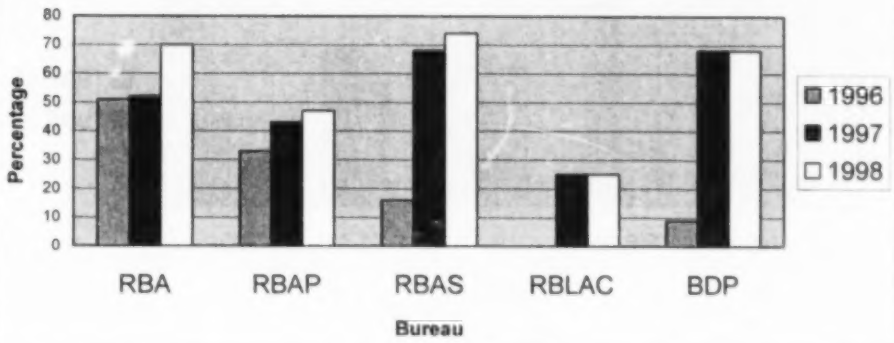
2. Compliance status of the 1990 portfolio

24. The overall rate of strict compliance has improved from the 51 per cent reported last year to 59 per cent (table 13). This is due mainly to the positive movements in the portfolios of RBA (from 52 to 70 per cent) and RBAS (from 68 to 74 per cent). The low level of the rates of strict compliance of RBLAC (25 per cent) and RBAP (47 per cent) is affecting the attainment of the target of 70 per cent set for the end of 1998.

Table 13. Compliance status of the 1990 portfolio

	RBA	RBAP	RBAS	RBLAC	RBEC	BDP	Total
Projects over $1 million	69	95	19	4	1	22	210
Evaluations received	35	39	13	1	1	15	104
Evaluations not conducted, with full justification	13	6	1	0	0	0	20
Strict compliance (%)	70	47	74	25	100	68	59
Reports awaited	3	4	1	0	0	2	10
Evaluations scheduled	5	14	2	0	0	0	21
Likely compliance (%)	81	66	89	25	100	77	74
Other actions	0	1	0	1	0	2	4
Evaluations not conducted	3	12	1	1	0	0	17
No clear information	10	19	1	1	0	3	34

Figure 2. Compliance evolution for the 1990 portfolio, by year of reporting



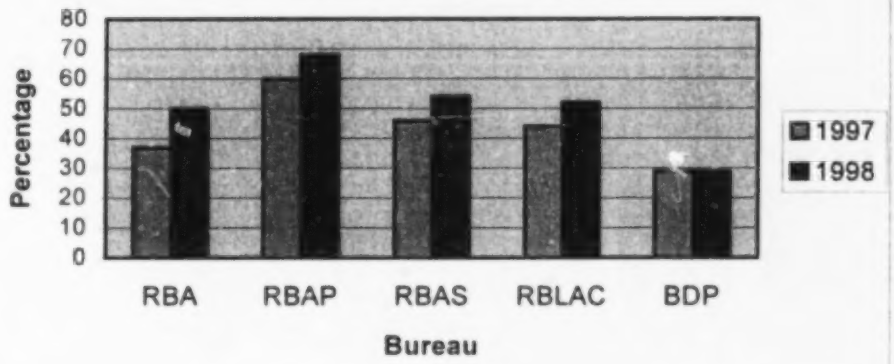
RBEC is not included because only one project was subject to mandatory evaluation.

25. The increase in the overall rate of likely compliance from 63 to 74 per cent is due to improvements in the rates by RBA and RBAP. The number of cases with an unclear evaluation status has been reduced from 59 to 34, out of which 10 cases are from RBA and 19 from RBAP.

3. Compliance status of the 1991 portfolio

26. The overall rate of strict compliance has increased from 47 to 56 per cent owing to improvements in the rates of strict compliance of RBA (from 37 to 50 per cent), RBAP (from 60 to 68 per cent), RBAS (from 46 to 54 per cent) and RBLAC (from 44 to 52 per cent). The compliance rate of BDP remains as reported last year (29 per cent).

Figure 3. Compliance evolution for the 1991 portfolio, by year of reporting



RBEC is not included because only one project was subject to mandatory evaluation.

Table 14. Compliance status of the 1991 portfolio, by bureau

	RBA	RBAP	RBAS	RBLAC	RBEC	BDP	Total
Projects over $1 million	52	60	13	27	1	7	160
Evaluations received	26	37	7	12	0	2	84
Evaluations not conducted, with full justification	0	4	0	2	0	0	6
Strict compliance (%)	50	68	54	52	N/A	29	56
Reports awaited	0	2	2	2	0	1	7
Evaluations scheduled	6	4	1	5	1	0	17
Likely compliance	62	78	77	78	N/A	43	71
Other actions	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Evaluations not conducted	7	4	2	4	0	2	19
No clear information	12	8	1	1	0	2	24

27. The overall rate of likely compliance has improved from 63 per cent reported last year to 71 per cent owing to improvements in the rates of RBA, RBAP and RBLAC. However, the 71 per cent rate attained is lower than the target of 75 per cent set for the end of 1998.

28. The number of cases with an unclear evaluation status has been reduced from 44 to 24.

4. Compliance status of the 1992 portfolio

29. The initial review of the projects approved in 1992 shows an overall rate of strict compliance of 44 per cent (table 15). The compliance status on a bureau basis shows that RBAP has attained a rate of strict compliance of 64 per cent, followed by RBAS with 57 per cent, RBA with 53 per cent, RBLAC with 21 per cent and BDP with 10 per cent.

30. The overall rate of likely compliance of 51 per cent is considered low and the number of projects in the category "no clear information" is high.

Table 15. Compliance status of the 1992 portfolio, by bureau

	RBA	RBAP	RBAS	RBLAC	RBEC	BDP	Total
Projects over $1 million	45	64	7	43	1	20	180
Evaluations received	24	41	4	8	0	2	79
Evaluations not conducted, with full justification				1			1
Strict compliance (%)	53	64	57	21	N/A	10	44
Reports awaited	1			2			3
Evaluations scheduled	2	5		1			8
Likely compliance	60	72	57	28	N/A	10	51
Other actions	1						1
Evaluations not conducted	1		1	1			3
No clear information	16	18	2	30	1	18	85

5. Comparison of four project portfolios: 1988-1989, 1990, 1991 and 1992

31. The situation of the four project portfolios reviewed at a similar stage in their development is shown in table 16: the biennium 1988-1989 portfolio as of January 1996, the 1990 portfolio as of January 1997, the 1991 portfolio as of January 1998 and the 1992 portfolio as of January 1999. The rate of strict compliance (44 per cent) and the rate of likely compliance (51 per cent) for the projects approved in 1992 are higher only than the rates for the portfolio of projects approved in 1990. No clear information has been received for 47 per cent of the 1992 portfolio.

Table 16. Four portfolios of evaluations at a similar stage of development

	1988-1989 as of Jan. 1996	1990 as of Jan. 1997	1991 as of Jan. 1998	1992 as of Jan. 1999
Mandatory evaluations (A)	470	210	160	180
Reports received (B)	247	56	71	79
Evaluations not conducted, with full justification	23	16	4	1
Strict compliance (%): (B+C)/A	57	34	47	44
Reports awaited (D)	13	13	7	3
Evaluations scheduled (E)	10	17	19	8
Likely compliance if all reports are rec'd. (%): (B+C+D+E)/A	62	49	63	51
Evaluations not conducted but other actions taken	11	1	3	1
Not conducted but explained	17	7	12	3
No clear information	149	100	44	85

/...

C. Findings

32. The compliance target of 70 per cent that was set for the end of 1998 has been met by the portfolio of projects approved in the biennium 1988-1989.

33. The portfolios of projects approved in 1990 and 1991 are still short of attaining the targets for strict compliance of 70 and 75 per cent, respectively, established for the end of 1998.

34. The starting rate of strict compliance for the 1992 portfolio is low when compared to the target of 75 per cent established for the end of 2001.

35. In line with paragraph 11 regarding the 10-year period as the required time frame within which to complete the collection of evaluation reports, it is expected that the targets of 70 per cent for the 1990 portfolio and 75 per cent for the 1991 portfolio will be reached by the end of 1999 and 2000, respectively.

D. Follow-up to recommendations contained in last year's report

36. Despite the continuous reminders to bureaux and country offices, there was uneven compliance with the requirement that the evaluation leader complete the PEIS.

37. Provisions to trace the status of recommendations emerging from evaluations are included in the annual programme/project report (APR) in use by country offices from 1998 and are part of the new UNDP Programming Manual.

38. The introduction of the preparation, by country offices, of an evaluation plan for a three-year rolling period was closely monitored.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

39. The Evaluation Office has recommended that the compliance with mandatory evaluations and evaluation planning be considered as indicators of good practices in the strategic results framework (SRF) relating to management. This recommendation has been adopted.

40. The Evaluation Office will hold discussions with the Office for Audit and Performance Review (OAPR) about reporting - as part of the audit review of country offices - on institutions that have received UNDP support for 10 years or more. The aim is to have OAPR include in its reports a list of those institutions and an indication as to whether or not an evaluation has been conducted. Also, special actions will be pursued with the country offices to identify those institutions that have received UNDP support for 10 years or more since 1985.

41. In the field of evaluation planning, the Evaluation Office will take the necessary follow-up measures to ensure that the three-year rolling evaluation plans submitted by country offices are used as a management tool at the corporate level.